

MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
NOVEMBER 23, 2015 – 6:00PM

The Study Session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Massey at 6:00pm.

Council Members Present: Bridges, Bruce, Knol, Massey, Rich and Steckloff

Council Members Absent: Lerner

Others Present: City Manager Boyer, City Clerk Smith, Directors Gajda, Mekjian and Schnackel and City Attorney Joppich

SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Ellen Schnackel, Director of Special Services, introduced her staff members Deputy Director Bryan Farmer and Facilities Coordinator Jeff Hotchkiss.

Director Schnackel and Deputy Director Farmer provided an update on the Department focusing on the spring/summer activities of 2015 and discussing the facilities and marketing efforts.

Councilmember Rich mentioned that she has been asked by residents who use the dog park if the City would consider keeping it open until 7pm. She realizes the early closing time of 6pm was probably due to the time change; however, it is already dark at 6pm and some residents would like it open later so they have time to get there after work.

Director Schnackel stated that typically the park hours change with the seasons but she would look into that option.

Mayor Pro-Tem Knol indicated that she has heard some concerns with the splash pad at Heritage Park being overcrowded and difficulty with older children running around and playing rough in the younger children areas and the lack of supervision for the older children. She requested that staff continue to monitor those situations as well as the cleanliness of the splash pad; and if necessary, consider the use of wristbands to allow access and consider a charge for non-residents. She added that the fact it is being used is great, but she would not want residents to feel like they did not want to go there due to overcrowding and some of these other concerns.

Director Schnackel stated that they did pay close attention to this over the summer and will continue to monitor the situation and review the need for charging an access fee for non-residents.

Councilmember Bridges inquired what the department is doing to promote Farmington Hills. Director Schnackel responded that city staff just met on this topic and as far as Special Services, they have identified the archery range and youth acting camps as unique to Farmington Hills and they market those programs as well as all of their programs to attract not only residents but people outside of Farmington Hills. They also use social media and publish a bi-annual report and have developed partnerships with outside resources.

Councilmember Rich inquired about the possibility of a community garden and suggested creating a Facebook page for specific events. Ms. Schnackel indicated that they have talked about the idea of a

community garden, but need to further explore possible locations. She agreed that a Facebook page specific to certain events was a great idea.

Mayor Pro-Tem Knol stated that the Beautification Commission has also discussed a community garden and in their research they found it to be quite time consuming. She suggested that the City reach out to the Commission to include them on any discussions regarding a community garden.

Mayor Massey inquired if there was a plan to expand the STEM program. Deputy Director Farmer replied that this was the first year of a 3-year program under a grant that was received and they do plan to expand the program that would mainly target the upper elementary to high school age students but also include some type of programming in the pre-schools.

DISCUSSION ON INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

City Manager Boyer stated that similar to the residential roads, some of the industrial roads are to the point where the City needs to initiate maintenance.

Director of Public Services Mekjian explained that the road millage passed by the voters recently included industrial and commercial roads as did the new SAD policy adopted by Council. He showed the industrial/commercial areas on a map and stated that some of the discussion points are to review the definition of an industrial/commercial road, city contribution, apportionment of costs to the properties within the district and creating a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for industrial/commercial roads and variables for prioritization of those projects.

Director Mekjian stated that the City's 2009 Master Plan identifies these roads as Secondary Collectors and Local Streets and the City classifies these roads as Major Roads for the purposes of Act 51 revenues. He also discussed the definition of Local Roads per the City ordinance.

Attorney Joppich added that if money is being derived from the road millage, the city's contribution should be limited to up to 20% as it is for residential roads and per the City Charter.

City Assessor Matt Dingman explained that staff reviewed using frontage, the footprint of the building and acreage as ways to distribute the cost to properties within the district. He noted that there are huge variances with regard to frontage and there has to be a relationship between the cost and benefit. Using the footprint was problematic if the building were vacant or underutilized so using the land area seemed to be the best method and most defensible.

Director Mekjian distributed a proposed CIP for the Industrial/Commercial Roads that outlined variables used for prioritization. He mentioned that that the proposed variables were those identified by city staff.

Councilmember Rich inquired if other communities were using this approach for industrial/commercial roads.

Assessor Dingman responded that he has not found another community in the area using special assessment districts for industrial/commercial roads at this time, but added that Farmington Hills had one of the first industrial parks so they may be the first community having to look at this issue.

Director Mekjian stated that one road that they wanted to discuss with Council was Hills Tech as this road was unique in that it connects Haggerty and Halsted and is used similar to a ½ Mile Road by vehicles and not only by the vehicles going to and from the businesses in the industrial park area.

Mayor Pro-Tem Knol mentioned New Market Street as well that was more of a thoroughfare to the existing traffic light.

It was mentioned that this road also serves as loading and unloading for the grocery store and that there is access from this road to a Church and ballfields.

Discussion was held on these two roads and if they should be considered a major road for purposes of including in a special assessment district.

Mayor Massey suggested discussing the other industrial/commercial roads as a group and those two streets separately as they are unique.

City Manager Boyer commented that Hills Tech and New Market currently have a PASER rating between a 4 and 6 so those could be addressed down the road and that the focus right now would be on the roads that have a PASER rating of 1 or 2.

City Engineer Jim Cubera noted that there is funding in the budget for the city contribution and if Council determines to move forward with the industrial/commercial roads, staff would be presenting this much like they do the residential roads and holding an informational meeting with the property owners and asking City Council to set a public hearing date of determination.

Mayor Massey inquired if there is City Council consensus to use the same process as is used for residential roads and to contribute up to 20% towards the projects.

Councilmember Bruce stated that he is struggling a bit with this concept and inquired what has been done in the past. Mr. Mekjian stated that none of the industrial/commercial roads have been replaced to this point.

Councilmember Steckloff inquired if businesses also pay for the road millage. Mr. Mekjian confirmed that businesses pay towards the road millage.

Mayor Pro-Tem Knol inquired when staff would propose to start with the industrial/commercial roads and if that would interfere with the prioritization of the residential projects.

Engineer Cubera stated that they would most likely hold an informational meeting in the next couple of months with the first project to begin in 2017.

City Manager Boyer stated that it will not interfere with other projects and that there is a budget for industrial/commercial properties and a separate CIP would be developed for these properties.

It was the consensus of City Council to move forward with a similar process as residential roads and as presented this evening.

DISCUSSION ON AMENDING THE PIMLICO WATER AND SANITARY SEWER PAYBACK RESOLUTIONS

Director Mekjian explained that in 2013 a Payback Resolution was brought before City Council for the Pimlico Street water main and sanitary sewer. He noted that the Resolution stated that if the properties included in the Payback District determined to connect within one year of the date of the Resolution, the parties would have the option to pay the cost over a 10-year payment plan. That 10-year time period has since passed and one of the properties has changed ownership and the new owner wants to connect but

cannot afford the lump sum amount. They have asked if they could be part of a payment plan as was first offered as part of the Resolution.

Mr. Mekjian stated that Attorney Joppich has informed him that in order to do this, City Council would have to agree to amend the previous Resolution. He is looking for a consensus from City Council to amend the Resolution for this project as well as the for Middlebelt Road water main that was recently approved. He is also looking for some direction from City Council on an appropriate time frame for repayment. He explained if Council agrees to move forward with amending the Resolutions, they would be placed on the December 14th Council agenda for consideration.

Mayor Massey inquired if they extended the time frame for another 10 years, would that cover the life span of the water main and sanitary sewer in that area. City Manager Boyer stated that he believes it would cover the life span of those utilities.

Attorney Joppich clarified the time frames set by Resolution for connecting and for payment.

Councilmember Rich inquired if an amended Resolution would apply to the entire district. Mr. Mekjian confirmed that it would apply to all properties within the district.

The consensus of City Council was to move forward with the amended Resolutions for both projects to appear on their December 14th meeting agenda for consideration.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further discussion, Mayor Massey adjourned the study session at 7:22pm

Respectfully submitted,



Pamela B. Smith, City Clerk

